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PLAYBOY: "I did it because I could." Thus explains President Clinton on his motive for his affair with Monica Lewinsky. This would appear to be the motive for much of Boomerdom. "I did drugs because I could." "I had sex because I could." It is not so much immorality as amorality that drives such behavior. In the absence of moral order or authority, the fool is free to pursue all courses with abandon. Is amorality more troublesome than immorality?

NM: Immorality is a clearer concept. We know we're up to something that by our moral logic is forbidden. "Amoral" is more ambiguous. It falls into several categories. People can be amoral in business, or in their loyalties, but generally speaking, we think of an amoral man as a sexist. Even that word has its sub-categories. One type doesn't give a damn about the partner. His pleasure goes into achievement. Such a dude will measure prowess by how many times he gets laid. Even more important: What rating did the woman give him?

Then there's biological amorality. The man is suffering a heavy physical need. The need is more important to him than the

partner. That's animal, if you will, but it is not as related to the ego.

JBM: Can there ever truly be amorality? For me, everybody, whether they know it or not, lives by a code, and when they break their own code, it bothers them.

NM: Okay, some amoral people do work by a code. That's more interesting. Let's say that for them the whole moral system is a lot of crap. So, ignore it. They believe that any orthodox moral system breeds illness, pain, frustration, and deception of oneself.

The old Playboy philosophy used to weigh in on how we have to change our sexual mores. "Stick to one woman" was not what Hef was all about.

I would say this aspect of amorality can be justified. One can argue that we have the right to make many sorties into sex when we are single, and to find new partners all the time. The underlying notion is that sooner or later, the cumulative knowledge we gain will ready us for a serious love. Many a sexist who has a rep as a good lover might, under all that, be dreaming of a great love to come. Such studs are getting ready for the big meeting by having many affairs en route to the championship. More than one movie star subscribes to this psychology. Seen as a vehicle to increase one's knowledge, amorality becomes more interesting.

Henry Miller once said something to the effect that there's no such thing as a bad fuck. I think he meant that no matter how

horrible it can get, you always learn something about the woman and about yourself. Some people do dig into fucking like gold miners. They're not worrying about the earth—they want the goddamn gold. If the pick-axe strikes rock, they'll go elsewhere.

JBM: Do you learn more from sleeping with ten women, or sleeping with one woman for ten years?

NM: A man full of sensuality would probably opt for the first course. You need to feel extraordinary love to be faithful to someone for ten years. After my own checkered career, being married six times, with 8 children and one terrific stepson—I've been on both sides of that question.

I've certainly been amoral in my day. Cold as ice with a few.

But on the other hand, I've been attracted immensely to the qualities that women have. My amorality—if we're going to get into it—was a search. I wanted to learn more about sex. I sometimes think if pornography had come along when I was a young man, it would have dispensed with a lot of friction in my personal life. Because you do learn a lot from pornography.

Women's animal qualities are exemplified positively or negatively in a porny film. Besides, you might be a little less likely to marry the first woman you find who is highly sexual.

JBM: I want to get back to Clinton's quote: "I did it because I could." What are your thoughts on the way he referred to Monica Lewinsky in his book?

NM: As people go, Clinton is not the worst guy you're going to meet. He has a lot of natural warmth, plus a good deal of everything else a president needs, calculation, manipulation, interest in his work, all of that. In this case, I thought his particular remarks were needlessly cruel. I believe he would have preferred to speak nicely about Monica Lewinsky, but you've got to remember he has an angry and injured wife on his hands. He had to weigh in with something to satisfy her—Hillary was more on his mind than Monica.

"I did it because I could" is an empty remark. Anyone who's met Monica knows she's very attractive. She's got beautiful coloring, she's intense, she's bright—that's the real reason why he did it.

And for another reason entirely, which may be richer, although it is certainly meaner. A bright woman I know once said, "Clinton lived in a minimum security prison. Every fifteen minutes, security checked up on where he was." I thought, she's absolutely right. What we're dealing with here was an incarcerated man. It's as if he was in the finest, grandest minimum security prison in the world, the White House. In that sense, 5% of him is a convict.

JBM: And once you're in prison, you do what you can get away with?

NM: Exactly.

JBM: Then his remark is not so hollow.

NM: I see what you're saying—yes, it's not as hollow as I thought.

He did it not because he could, but because he wanted to get away with it. He could turn his incarceration a little bit around.

Nonetheless, I still think the style of phrasing comes because of his wife. Having been married six times, I have some idea of what one says on such occasions.

JBM: You're a good one to talk to about that. But, more to the point, Bill Clinton has a wife who plans to run for high office. Is it

immoral or amoral to make a calculated decision to strip humanity away from Monica in order to protect the image of his wife as a strong potential candidate?

NM: Both. Immoral in that he is most calculatedly not telling the truth about his real feelings. It's amoral because he wants to keep the political process going: all politicians have to be amoral to a degree. It's a question of how much. Are they 44% amoral or 88%? Politicians cannot possibly afford morality except as a series of specious sentiments ready to be uttered as patriotic or theological slogans. A politician has to deal with the given. That means they can even tell the truth at times. Usually, they're only pretending. Politicians build up profound habits of not addressing

the truth head-on. In practice, they have to shake hands with people they can't bear, and proffer patriotic remarks that don't come from the heart.

Now, whether immoral, amoral, or both, it was, finally, a necessity. It was—the two holy words for politicians—the given.

JBM: Isn't it possible for a politician to live by his own code today?

NM: No. Not a successful politician.

JBM: Was it possible in FDR's day?

NM: It's never possible. Go back to the maxim: "Politics is the art of the possible." What's important is to get some part of what

you want, done. That's how a democracy works. By pieces and parts.

The irony is, the only way you can come near a direct expression of your personality is in a dictatorship. Of course, as democrats, we feel instinctively that no human being is good enough to be entrusted with that kind of power. So in a democracy, change always comes from negotiation. When adversaries walk away from a political compact, each side is a bit dissatisfied.

JBM: I'm still too much of an optimist. I think that's choice B.

NM: Well, if you ever get into politics, you're going to discover how many compromises have to be made, willy-nilly.

JBM: I suppose that's true. In the end, the distinguishing factor between a decent politician and a corporate puppet is not if he is willing to compromise, but what he is willing to compromise.

PLAYBOY: You've written about the cultural necessity of literature. Yet we now live in a time when the novelist and literature itself are borderline irrelevant. There's an absence of interiority, of serious, concentrated thought. We may be in danger of losing literature forever. What would this mean for American culture?

NM: As a novelist, I'm now speaking from my vested position.

My profession is being eroded. When I began, good novelists were more important in the scheme of things. The irony is that the

great novelists like Hemingway and Faulkner probably didn't sell as many copies per book as a few serious novelists sell now. But they were revered. They affected history. They had their impact on America. Hemingway was a prodigious influence for young American writers. He taught a lot of us how to look for the tensile strength of a sentence.

I think a nation's greatness depends, to a real extent, on how well-spoken its citizens are. Good things develop out of a populace that really knows how to use the language and use it well. Would Great Britain have been able to manage the empire in the Nineteenth Century without their three hundred and more years of reading Shakespeare? Where would Ireland be today without

Joyce? Not as prosperous, I expect. As a language deteriorates, becomes less eloquent, less metaphorical, less salient, less poignant, a curious deadening of the human spirit comes seeping in.

By now, America has shifted from being a country with a great love of freedom and creativity (in constant altercation with those other Americans who wanted rule and order) into a country that's now much more interested in power. And power, I can promise you, is not interested in metaphor. Metaphor is antagonistic to power because it pushes you to think in more poetic and contradictory ways. Power demands a uni-linear approach. Power does not welcome poetic concepts.

JBM: But hasn't power always been a driving force in society?

NM: Always. But it was situated among other driving forces such

as culture and art and love of sports and good architecture and

tradition. Now, it's as if corporate power has become the most

dominant theme of our lives. In ten more years, will we find a

professional stadium that is not named for a corporation?

JBM: Or a Broadway theater.

The lack of rage against that from the artistic community is

depressing but not surprising. The majority of the biggest

celebrities today are manufactured by the largest corporations. It's

hardly in their interest to attack the money, even if their benefactor

is turning the name of a theater into an advertisement for the

company. Gone are the days when writers had the same influence as rock stars. Justin Timberlake, who I'm sure is a nice guy, should not be influencing a generation. He's a pop singer. He was created by Disney. Part of his job is not to have an opinion. Somewhere between the lines, I'm not sure where, it shifted from great minds speaking to the masses to celebrities speaking to the masses.

NM: Be careful. You're too young to know how it was back then.

Great minds almost never speak directly to the masses.

JBM: Not directly. But Hemingway would write a piece, you would write a piece, and people would discuss it and debate it, go back and forth—

NM: Leave me out of it.

JBM: To this day, people come up to me who read "The White Negro" when they were teenagers, and they want to argue with me about it. It still affects them nearly fifty years later. I don't think any essay by anyone written today could do the same. There are too many other forms of media that are digested more easily, too easily.

That's one reason Michael Moore is interesting. He's aware that while his books are good, and serve his purpose, he is going to reach so many more through his movies. The problem is you can't get the same depth of an idea across in a sound bite—there's no way.

NM: Why not use a rating system for ideas? The most profound ideas are those one is willing to die for. By that measure, Karl Marx has to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Because hundreds of thousands of people in his time and after were willing to die for his ideas. All over the world, millions were willing to go to prison for them.

This is not to raise a latter-day defense of Marx. He had incredible virtues as a thinker. From my point of view, he also had his lacks. He certainly didn't understand that atheism is not a way to win the world. You can't. Not by that route. Half the people alive—or is it three-quarters?—have instinctive notions that God exists. I think the real failure of Bolshevism, then Stalinism, was

clinging to the idea that religion is the opium of the masses.

Organized religion may well be its own species of narcotic but the concept that we are part of divine Creation is something else altogether.

If we're ever going to have a great society in the future—which is hardly a guaranteed conclusion—if we ever build a world with real freedom, we may have to arrive at the recognition that we can dispense with fundamentalism, and live instead with the idea that God is a Creator, not a law-giver.

JBM: To shift the subject back to your home turf, who is going to be the last novelist?

NM: Probably someone analogous to the poor poet today who is writing five-act verse plays in iambic pentameter. I do foresee a day when very few will look at serious fiction. Instead, they will read computer novels. The computer is better suited to turn out a best-seller than a mediocre novelist. But not too many people will still be interested in serious literary work. Whole populations will be looking for technological power rather than exploring into those moral questions they hope to ponder anywhere but in the serious novel.

The best fiction has always been the seed-bed for the most interesting and subtle moral questions, questions that, at best, go deeper than the wisdom you can receive in any church or

synagogue or mosque. When it comes to moral paradox, theology is limited. It's too structured. Interesting morality almost never fits pre-arranged moral codes. It's only the novelist—the very good novelist—who can deal with such moral issues as "Am I on balance a good person or a bad one?" You don't find that out by declaring, "Well, I'm good because I obey the Ten Commandments." That doesn't make you good. You can still be a horror if you restrict the lives of others with your piety. The real question is how do you affect other people's lives? The best novels are marvelous for delving into the subtler questions of our nature.

After all, what is human nature? We're still finding that out. It is immensely various, even as God, I believe, is immensely

various. We're the children, if you will, of the Creator. I believe that God doesn't want to give us orders from above; rather, He wishes us to discover things about our nature that we can send back to Him. Or Her. Does the parent always wish to be superior to the child? No. Most parents want their children to surpass them.

JBM: One would hope that very reason, right there, is enough to keep the novel alive.

NM: You're leaving out the social imperatives of the people who run things. An immensely powerful global capitalism is shaping up. That capitalism does not need or look for inquiry into delicate matters. Its need, rather, is to keep the bullshit train running at top

speed. It has to enforce the self-serving notion that corporations are good for human existence. It needs to have most people believing that big business is the only way to do it. The last thing those gentlemen need is novels.

Part of the genius of corporate capitalism is that they've found ways to control people which are so much subtler than the old Stalinist procedures. Those methods were brutal, dull, cold, stupid and openly oppressive. The modern form of oppression is nuanced; it gets into your psyche—it makes you think there's something wrong with you if you're not on the big capitalist team. So they don't want writers exploring into morality. They want one morality, theirs. Unlike Stalinism at its worst, it's more of a benign

regime, superficially open and ready for the development of technology which will make all our lives extraordinary—sure, technology will end up keeping us alive for 150 or 200 years, even if three-quarters of each of us will be replacement parts. "'I'm on my fourth heart,' says the man who is 200 years old." I'm not sure that's either God's intention or the real human intention. It may be an ultimate destruction of the human spirit to stay alive beyond a certain point. Maybe death is as important to life as life itself. To keep extending the years of your life—that could be one more form of evil. Much too much is being taken for granted today.

But I must go back to the original point: The good novel, the serious novel, is antipathetic to corporate capitalism. The best-

seller is one of the props of corporate capitalism precisely because it's an entertainment. "At the end of the day, I want to have fun," says the nine-to-fiver. "Give me asshole TV shows, exploitation films with lots of bang. I don't need to read a good book—I want a page-turner." Well, every time there's a page-turner to read for too little, someone's mind is being dulled. Even page-turners can get into interesting questions, but dependably, they will always veer away from moral exploration.

JBM: You're talking about good art which pushes you. I think the challenge, though, is to make a serious novel entertaining so people can't put it down. That's the only way to compete with the various other forms of media.

NM: I started as that kind of writer and I know how easy it is. It's routine to write a page-turner. There are such simple rules. I can teach any mediocre writer to turn one out. But I'm interested in something that's good enough and well enough written so that you have to stop on the page and read a sentence over a few times.

Why? Because it vibrates within you. A page-turner is equal to a fast-paced sit-com.

JBM: What are your thoughts on the power that Oprah Winfrey wields over a book? You know, recently she put "Anna Karenina" on her book of the month list and it became a best-seller again.

NM: I salute her for that. It so happens "Anna Karenina" is one of my all-time favorite novels. I had that and "War and Peace" on my

desk while I was writing "The Naked and the Dead." To get steamed up to write every morning, I'd read five or ten pages of "Anna Karenina." So, yes, I applaud her for that.

JBM: Because she has such popular mass appeal, she can take something that is hard to read and make it a best-seller. That gives me hope.

NM: But if she keeps doing it, her popularity will begin to diminish and then we'll begin to see the real test of her character.

Is she devoted to great literature or is she, quite naturally, a little more devoted to the power of her own career?

JBM: Perhaps through the power of her own career, she can raise great literature back to the popular level of best-sellers.

NM: No. No person can do that. You're so young you still believe in the power of individuals. The hard fact—which I would like to see develop in you, my friend, over the next ten years, is a much deeper sense of social structure. Because society is paramount. It's as if we're little animals running through the machine. Occasionally we touch a switch, something starts, we start another little machine, but we can't really alter the nature of the machine that much. Not without great study and long-term devotion plus willingness to get into the grease of the gears.

JBM: And great luck. No, I respect the complexity of the social machine—I don't think one person can change it by themselves, but I do agree with Robert F. Kennedy that every action you take is

equivalent to throwing a pebble into a pond. It is the ripples that affect the machine.

NM: The ripples die out.

JBM: Unless they're strong enough.

NM: How many times does a pebble thrown into a pond change the nature of the shoreline? Let's stop the crap.

PLAYBOY: Provincetown in mid-winter. How is it to live in a place that seems abandoned and bereft? Is it better than during the high season?

NM: For a writer of my age, it's better in the off-season. There's an old saying about P'town that in the winter you can roll a bowling ball down Commercial Street and it'll never hit anyone.

So it is lonely here in February and March and mean and cold. It's damp, it's lonely, and I love it. It fits my mood. It's much easier to spend the day writing if it's gray outside. Besides, the people I used to know here years ago are dead now. (Most of them from drink.) Provincetown has changed profoundly since. In summer, it's now the gay capital of the Northeast. Forty or fifty years ago, it used to be The Wild West of the East—you had motorcycle gangs coming in on Saturdays. And at 1 A.M. on Sunday morning, you'd have people going up in the hills for bacchanals, everybody carrying booze or beer. Marriages broke up and serious affairs started on many of those nights.

JBM: Well, you still have motorcycle gangs coming in—it's just that now they're wearing leather chaps and nothing else.

NM: [laughs] All right.

JBM: Having spent a lot of time in Provincetown growing up, I don't think of it as a gay town. As a member of the heterosexual underground, I see it as a very libertarian place. As long as you're not hurting anyone else, whatever you're doing is cool. And, because there is so much sexual energy flying through the air, the hetero nightlife is jumping.

NM: Good to hear that. There's always been so much going on in Provincetown. There are amazing contradictions here. After all, this is the place where the Pilgrims first landed.

JBM: Why did they leave?

NM: Like all good white people who are righteous and not quite aware of how mean they can be underneath their righteousness, they were full of themselves. After all, they had dared to leave their roots and sail across the Atlantic cramped in a small boat.

They got here through true difficulty. At the end, it was even hard to navigate the waters around Cape Cod, but there is a natural harbor in Provincetown where the land curls around in a spiral.

So they made anchor in this harbor—parenthetically, the spot where they first rowed their longboat to land now offers a huge motel. We are nothing in America if not ready for profit. The Puritans, however, found the soil not particularly welcoming, full

of sand and brush-pine, not good for farming. They were in search of food, went scouting around. While reconnoitering eight miles south of Provincetown, they found a place in Truro (now called Corn Hill) where the Indians had stored their grain for the coming winter. So the Puritans brought the corn back to the Mayflower, and in the reverberations of that action killed a couple of Indians. Shortly after, one of those Puritans probably said to another, "Prithee, brother, let's get the fuck out!" So they sailed to the other side of Massachusetts Bay, some forty miles across the water, and moved into Plymouth which then became the founding place of America. Hail to the first Thanksgiving!

Well, a couple of hundred years later, the locals here became furious at the ongoing self-serving pride of Plymouth. How did that town dare to call itself the founding place of America? So they started petitioning Washington, D.C.. By 1907, that got so hot that a first cornerstone was laid by Theodore Roosevelt in a Masonic ceremony, and by 1910, a formidable tower having been erected by subscription (a copy of an Italian tower in Sienna), President Taft arrived for the opening festivities. This exceptionally phallic tower is now called the Pilgrim Monument.

JBM: So America started with white people stealing corn, killing natives, and going on the lam.

NM: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Did women's sexuality shape human evolution?

According to a theory in Leonard Shlain's new book, "Sex, Time

and Power," menstruation is what enabled women to develop a

sense of time and forethought. Language evolved, he says,

primarily because men and women had to negotiate sex. Women_

became expert at reading between the lines of various

Pleistocenes. Beauty was developed to maintain the interest of

men. Is this why_women control men?

NM: I haven't read the book, but that theory does strike me as

wobbly. For example, negotiating sex. Where is the new idea

there? After all, animals certainly negotiate sex. I had two

Standard Poodles once, many years ago, Tibo and Zsa-Zsa, and

Zsa-Zsa was one hell of a bitch, always nipping at Tibo's nuts. I

was afraid Tibo would end up as no man at all by the time he came

of age—we first had them when they were pups. How she

dominated him! She had fierce teeth. He'd have to duck, and sit

down fast. These earlier negotiations taught him a lot, however.

He came to see what was not yet called for. The moment Zsa-Zsa

came into heat for the first time, however, he was ready and seized

her without a by-your-leave and impregnated her. Nine pups for

one coupling. Over the next three years, before they were done,

they created 34 new Standard Poodles. Negotiations never ceased.

Animals not only have a great deal of language in their grunts,

their groans, their whines, their moans, their baying at the moon,

but their scents. Odor used to have more to do with sex than language—at least until deodorants came on the scene. But before the advent of whiff-deadening products in spray cans, any combination of strong genital odor mixed with perfume was pretty damned aphrodisiacal, yessir, all through every barnyard and royal court of Europe right through the Second World War. So the notion that language had to be developed to facilitate sex cannot, by my lights, make it as the logo on a T-shirt.

JBM: How about this sense of time and forethought Shlain claims was developed through menstruation?

NM: That's too large a question for me.

JBM: Well, how about one that is not—do women control men?

NM: Completely.

JBM: I'm glad you agree.

NM: Before women's liberation came along, men used to have some purchase on control in a marriage. Perhaps 35%. The woman had the remaining 65. Now, after women's liberation, it's up to 95%.

JBM: Wow!

NM: I could be wrong, maybe it's only 85%.

JBM: Is this why men are forever at a loss in regard to the dominance of women?

NM: Well, women are closer to creation than we are. So, they have deeper instincts.

JBM: They create life, we destroy it.

NM: Oh, let's not get into that. Women have deadened as many men in subtle ways, for subtle reasons, as men have beaten women down in more overt fashion.

JBM: I'm not saying one is more vicious than the other. I'm saying, traditionally, men have gone to war and women have raised the children. That's changing. Women are going to war and we've seen what happens at Abu Ghraib.

NM: Yes, that poor pregnant girl. . .

JBM: I feel for her.

NM: You do?

JBM: She was in the wrong place with the wrong guys, feeling the wrong pressures and now she's all alone.

NM: She really is. I also can see how wild the parties are getting all over America this season. The key factor at Abu Ghraib was, "Hey, none of you at home are going to believe this until you see our photographs." And while a lot of that picture-taking was probably given a subtle go-ahead by their superiors—some of the photos could obviously be employed to goad the prisoners into talking—"You don't want your family to see you like this," the Abu Ghraib gang were also delighted to send a lot of the good stuff home to their friends. Just think of the kind of party that's been going on back in America while Bush keeps talking about how

splendid a Christian nation we are. You know, I love this country with all its faults—it's been good to me—but one of our huge spiritual crimes is that we're the bullshit kingdom of all time.

JBM: The Bullshit Kingdom of all time? Well, that's a piece in and of itself. Let's stick to men and women for the moment. What do you think of the gender roles now that women are expected to raise a family and be successful in the workplace?

NM: For me, any notion that males are superior to females or females superior to males is, I'd say, like comparing dogs to cats. To my mind, it's a hopeless argument. Men are so fundamentally different from women.

I still have to say that the desire for power in women that's revealed itself in the last 35 years is not attractive. The power they used to have was vastly more interesting. It used to be fun to realize a woman was smarter than you. In the course of living one's life and learning how to handle oneself, there were women who developed such tasty subtleties about how to control us. They were like animal handlers if you will. And the animal, even the lion, almost always adores the handler. Now they're dominating us openly, and in the worst way—by ideology. "The whip and the knout for you, buddy, we are the politically correct."

JBM: I don't think I agree with that. It's changing. There was the height of political correctness, which bordered on fascism and it

was terrifying. But the majority of the women that I know, they want a real man—they don't want a man they can walk all over.

NM: Well, good. I'm 81, and these unhappy experiences occurred to me 30 years ago.

JB: You were living then at the peak of the gender war. But what's truly encouraging, what's encouraging me now, is I believe both sides are beginning to realize that we need more women in power, but we need women who do it the way a woman does it, not the way a man would do it if he were a woman.

NM: How is that relevant to what we're talking about?

JBM: Well, we're just now starting to see women getting into power positions who are still allowed to be women. They don't have to pretend to act like a man.

NM: Name a few, would you?

JBM: Arianna Huffington, Laura Dawn of MoveOn.Org, Hillary Clinton in her way.

NM: Hillary Clinton is a very good example. I met her many years ago when she was the governor's wife in Arkansas. Probably in '84. She was immensely intelligent—I happened to sit next to her at dinner—and we had a very good conversation. I was impressed with how bright she was, how open, and what a fine mind she had. She's not as interesting now. Today, she's a

politician. She's very cautious. Her books are boring. What's that one, "It Takes a Village. . ."—full of cant. The way Maggie Thatcher was full of cant. You say what's useful to say, not what you believe. You never speak from the heart. Hillary is always watch-dogging her tongue these days. Totally unspontaneous in exactly the way an average mediocre-to-good, effective politician oversees his spiel.

JBM: But as we said before, she's a politician at a high level—she has no choice.

NM: So why get excited about her as a role model?

JBM: I'm not saying we're there yet. But I do have hope that the future players are beginning to emerge.

NM: All right. I can see a time when women will be more important politically than they are now, and for better reasons, but that doesn't mean anything much is going to change. In a certain sense, a politician, regardless of gender, is neutered politically by the process. A lot of politicians may be attractive in person because, after all, they're pressing the flesh. All the time. Shake a thousand hands in a morning and an afternoon and you're horny by the end of the day. The hands are telling you something. Where's the guy who won't get a hard-on if he's admired by a lot of women? But, nonetheless, politics dehumanizes you. I don't say this out of sour grapes because when I ran for mayor in that Democratic primary back in 1969, I considered it my duty. Believe it or not, I

felt God wanted me to go into politics to save New York. I was a high-octane fool. And I wasn't nearly as good as I thought I'd be.

All the same, I was prepared to pay the price. I knew I would never write again in any serious way if I got elected. I knew I would use up my soul in hard work of a sort that would not be happy for me. But I felt: "I haven't been a good guy—I want to save my soul." Now this was not only simplistic thinking (which is no drawback to running for office) but I turned out to be an ineffectual politician. All the same, I was ready to bite the bullet.

What I learned from the effort and the defeat is that politics can be a tremendously difficult business. You know, we respect even mediocre professional basketball players because they have

stamina. Well, very few humans can become good politicians due to the amount of work you run into. The responsibilities. The number of distasteful things you have to do. So, I don't sneer at politicians. I think they're entitled to the same kind of respect we give reasonably good athletes. Stamina is impressive. But I don't have any illusion that in becoming a politician you become a nobler person—very rarely does that occur. The only reason it happens once in a while is because it's an impossible Creation if you can't have exceptions to every last rule.

PLAYBOY: You once wrote somewhere: "As many people die from an excess of timidity as from bravery. Nobody ever mentions that." Do you care to give an explanation of courage?

NM: I have one. It's ready-made. Courage can only be measured by the place from which you start. Picture an old lady who is ill in every joint, terribly arthritic, nonetheless she has to cross a busy street and she can't quite keep up with the lights. Still, she feels an inner imperative to do it. And she does manage to get across even though she's terrified. I would call that courage. I would say it is analogous to the case of a well-trained Marine, a good kid, who gets into combat, sees his buddies wounded, sees a good friend killed, goes through hell. He gets to the point where he expects he will die. Until that moment, you can't really speak of his courage. He's been trained to be brave—you can motivate young people to be brave. But when you get to that crux in combat where you say,

"It's not worth it. I'm scared shitless, I can't go on, I want to quit, I don't care about my buddies, fuck it all, I want to quit"—and then another side of you takes over and says, "You will go on, whether you die or not, you will go on"—that's courage.

Otherwise, courage can be meaningless. If you're in a very easy war, and very well-trained in your martial skills, you may feel panic, but you're prepared to be brave.

So, I would say, courage is transcendence. Whatever our level of competence at more or less hairy activities, we are still obliged to go beyond ourselves, to transcend ourselves, if we wish to rise so high as courage itself.

That's why I say timidity kills. Kills more people than bravery because every time one's timid, one's pulling back creative impulses in oneself, denying them. One is denting one's ego. And as an ego contracts out of shame, illness begins. This is my opinion.

JBM: So courage is always a virtue?

NM: Absolutely! Make it the virtue. I would go so far as to say that it's very hard to feel love if you're full of shame. We can only feel love for someone else when we have gained respect for ourselves—it's why we have this endless obsession with courage. Where is the man who can ignore it? It's analogous to a woman who will wear no make-up, no jewelry, won't comb her hair

because she hates women who are elegant, feels those women are phony. "I want to be seen as my natural self." Yet that woman can never sneer at elegance with full confidence. A part of her feels there's something wrong with her. She isn't ready to get the utmost out of herself. By the same token, some men sneer at bravery, call it overrated, are always ready to point out how much trouble it breeds. Of course it does. A macho brute is a macho brute. But not even a saint can sneer at bravery with a completely clear and open heart. Not even a saint.

JBM: You know, one of the outcomes of living in such an organized society where everything is taken care of for us—men don't go out and kill their food for survival, etc.—there's a

complicity, almost a sense of deliberate amnesia that what it all comes down to is, ultimately we're fucking animals. And we will fight each other and if necessary, kill when our own is attacked.

And I don't know if this is true for every man out there, but I would say 90% of the men I know, when they meet another man, under the pleasant conversation is the question, "Can I take you or can you take me?" And usually it's a kind of fun, but regardless, it's always there. Something like 9/11 reminds us all on a national level that tomorrow, like that [snaps fingers] all of this societal bullshit could be gone and we're back to grunting and defending your fire. That's important. I think it's one of the major differences between the mentality of a man in the new millennium and the

mentality of a man in the '90s when political correctness was all the rage and the sensitive pony-tailed guy was getting laid more than he should.

NM: Well, I think you have an unbalanced situation when the sensitive—or over-sensitive—pony-tailed guy is getting laid more than the macho brute.

JBM: I don't know that he was getting laid more than the macho brutes, but he was certainly getting laid more than he should. And for too little.

NM: Oh, you're a bigot.

JBM: I've got my prejudices.

NM: Yes, you may have received them from your father.

JBM: It's a distinct possibility.

PLAYBOY: In Freud's essay, The Uncanny, he contends that the strongest instances of the uncanny involve "doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive, or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate." We live in an age where such distinctions become even less clear. This is indeed frightening. We're overmatched by our technology. Our ability to comprehend is exceeded by the ability to construct and fabricate. You have spoken of the inanimate—that which cannot be animated. Increasingly, it seems, we are overcome by this uncanniness. Is there more of this to come in our future?

NM: I say absolutely yes. So long as technology expands and expands, we're going to have more of such uneasiness. I remember back in '69, I was down at NASA, south of Houston, covering the first landing on the moon, the flight of Apollo 11. In the book I later wrote about it, there was a chapter called "The Psychology of Machines" which discussed the immense amount of attention these NASA technicians gave to glitches. It truly worried the venture—there was something so spooky about glitches. NASA had the best technology available, and yet the most inexplicable little malfunctions would occur. It obsessed them. The real question, I decided, (even though they would never admit it to themselves)

was "Do machines have a psychology?" Do things go wrong because machines have temperaments?

JBM: Are we talking about a psychology or a soul?

NM: You're beyond me on that one. I was asking if there was an inner life in the machine that we were not in touch with. You rarely find a person now who has a computer who doesn't feel their magic box has no personality. Or, cars—everyone feels that his car has its own presence. Of course, this last is a case where the uncanny doesn't scare us, it pleases us almost.

JBM: You know, whenever I hook my computer up to the internet, I feel as if I have allowed 10,000 phalluses to enter her uninvited. I am left with the realization that I may have cheapened the

relationship. An intimacy we once shared of only my fingers on her keys is lost. As a result, she does not work as well for me.

NM: I think Freud put his finger on the nature of the uncanny.

Part of what is so depressing about modern technology is the way it cuts off our senses. One of the things most awful about plastic—and I've been fulminating against plastic—most unsuccessfully—for the last 30, 40 years, is that plastic is not uncanny. It's just there, inert. It's very hard to conceive of any kind of soul or spirit inhabiting the stuff because it doesn't come out of nature but from a truly evil-smelling set of factory processes. Even a wooden cane has a touch of personality, but plastic doesn't. I've always felt it is the handmaiden to technology. Why do people love technology?

It gives you more power than you'd have without the technology but you pay a heavy price. You become a little more inert in your finer sensibilities.

JBM: Where is our technology leading us? A car is certainly a piece of technology but not until recently was there plastic all over it.

NM: Yes, as they make plastic stronger, and more analogous to steel—which they will—so, in turn, cars are going to be made entirely of plastic because economically speaking, the plastic substitute is cheaper to work with and so offers more profit. No surprise then if the mediocrities have taken over the world under the banner of technology, corporate vision, and the unholy urge to

purvey democracy to all countries of the world, whether they're ready for it, or capable of it. But we tell them in effect, "You are going to end up a democracy whether you want it or not." This turns democracy into a farce. Because democracy is a grace. Any true democracy is sensitive enough to be perishable, and we're in danger right now of losing our democracy right here. The people who are running the world at present, very badly in many places, have the feeling that successfully controlled direction is the only answer. My feeling, of course, is exactly the opposite. Global capitalism does not speak of a free market but of a controlled globe. It is alien to the creative possibilities that have not yet been tapped in legions of people who've never had a chance to be

creative, who work and die without creative moments in their lives.

But their hopes have, I believe, been buried in their gene stream for generations, and so are passed on. When talented people emerge from no apparent cultural background, I see them as the product of these ten generations of frustration from people who wanted to be more than their lives gave them. Such an artist is now receiving the bounty that was packed into the dreams of his or her forbears.

This premise also works in reverse. Restrained evils, withheld evils, extended over many generations can end by producing a monster of a dictator.

JBM: There's an argument that our technology is stunting our evolution. Were we not spending so much time going out into the

computer, focusing on TV, processing the constant slew of advertisements, more people would be taking the inner journey and evolving, perhaps, to a higher psychic level. Instead, we're developing a technology where—every day we get closer to having one device—that will be your phone and your email, your this, your that, your internet access, a little device you carry with you at all times programmed to know your likes and dislikes. This device will send out a signal, broadcasting your information to all the other devices of the same nature, and as you pass a stranger on the street—say you both like to watch Star Trek, a little bell will go off on your respective machines. It will tell you that compatibility is near by. Why are we doing this?

NM: Because of a deep fear. We've lost the often crippling but nonetheless intense consolations of religion. Formal, organized religion introduced many perversities into our nature but it also offered many poor people some hope—if you were a good enough person, you'd enter heaven. But religion also stood in the way of development of capitalism and technology, corporate capitalism. A man running a small business is living by his wits, but people enter corporations in order not to have to live by their instincts—or, most important—their fears. Only a few have to take responsibility. The corporation can be a relatively benign organization, but it is still subtly totalitarian. And this is spreading. People at the top want to control the world because they're in terror

that otherwise we are going to blow it up. My feeling is if the corporations take over the world, the globe will indeed blow apart because technology could end by violating too much of human nature.

JBM: Hasn't technology taken over the world already?

NM: Not completely. Not completely. There are still corners and avenues, games and places.

JBM: There is still an underground. . .

NM: That underground has to go a long way before I will take it seriously, and yet I am ready to drink to that idea.

JBM: Cheers.

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5284872136

DATE : 8/10/04 2PM F1

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

DATE : 8/10/04 8PM F1

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

NORMAN MAILER AND JOHN BUFFALO MAILER

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW 7 AUGUST 2004

JBM: "I did it because I could." Thus explains President Clinton on his motive for his affair with Monica Lewinsky. This would appear to be the motive for much of Boomerdom. "I did drugs because I could." "I had sex because I could." It is not so much immorality as amorality that drives such behavior. In the absence of moral order or authority, the fool is free to pursue all courses with abandon. Is amorality more troublesome than immorality.

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 10 02:13:11 P2

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 10 02:14:41 P2

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

2

NM: Just off the top of my head, I'd say no. ~~The reason is that~~

~~Immorality~~ ^{Immorality} is a much clearer concept. When we're immoral, we

know we're doing something that by our moral logic should be

~~forbidden,~~ ^{whereas there's} and so there's an active, direct relation to our

~~immorality. Amoral situations can run anywhere from~~ let me

~~rephrase it.~~

There's something ambiguous about the word "amoral" ~~For~~

~~I believe~~ ~~example there are [tape off]~~ For me, amorality falls into several

~~separate conditions,~~ ^{People can be it} ~~altogether. For instance, amorality is usually~~

~~applied to sex. When we speak of someone as amoral, they can be~~

amoral in business, amoral in their ethics, but generally speaking.

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

11:11 PM

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243722

11:11 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

3

is that an amoral man
the essential notion behind it is that someone who is amoral is a

Even there, we find
sexist. So let's take it there for a start.

~~I think there are various kinds of amorality in sex. There's a~~

One
~~kind where you might say there's a kind of guy who doesn't give~~

It's goes into
~~a fuck about the partner. Their pleasure is entirely with~~

Such men
~~performance and achievement and they measure things not by how~~

~~much new and deep sentiment they're feeling. On the contrary~~

proceeds *and with*
~~they measure it by how many times they get laid, how many~~

Even more importantly, how does
~~women they have. But how high the woman rates them? There's~~

real *the performance*
~~terrible coldness in~~

Then there's *the man has*
~~There's another kind of amorality where there's no interest in~~

suffering a)
~~the partner, but this huge need, huge physical need, and this need~~

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872135

Aug 11 2004 3: 3PM F4

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243792

Aug 11 2004 3: 3PM F4

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

4

~~predominates over every other kind of emotion. That's another~~

~~kind of amorality. It's more animal, if you will. Less~~ ^{and not} ~~related to the~~

~~ego and more oriented to one's own genital needs.~~

JBM: Can there ever truly be amorality? For me, everybody

whether they know it or not, lives by a code, and when they're

breaking their code, it bothers them, ^{but they do it anyway,} ~~They might do it anyway,~~

~~because they get so much out of it, but~~

^{Okay, some} NM: ~~Well, there's a third one. Some~~ ^{do} ~~amoral people have a code~~

^{that's more interesting,} ~~and their code is the whole moral system is full of crap. It's all~~

^{that} ~~wrong. Let's ignore it. The received moral system on sex does~~ ^{they believe that the religiously}

^{breeds} ~~nothing but breed illness, pain, frustration, and~~ ^{and} ~~deception of oneself~~

FROM :nm

FAX NO. :5284872135

Aug 14 2004 3:31 PM F5

FROM :JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. :17186243782

Aug 14 2004 14:18PM F5

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

5

JBM: ~~Where is that coming from? The church?~~

NM: ~~No.~~ You can go so far as to say the old Playboy philosophy

as personified by Hugh Hefner was ~~saying~~ ^{declaring}, "we have to change our

sexual mores." ~~And Hef was not one to say,~~ "stick to one woman."

^{Hef}
~~That~~ was not what he was involved in.

^{sets} ^{there}
So the question ~~bounces right back~~ into Playboy's lap

^{this} ^{can be justified}
Because the ~~only~~ aspect of amorality ~~that is~~ justifiable,

~~conceivably, as not an ugly human emotion, is that one has the~~

One can argue that we have the
~~(right to make many experiments in sex, to go out and explore to~~

~~and~~ find new partners all the time because sooner or later, the

cumulative knowledge of these partners ^{can} ~~may~~ be readying ^{us} ~~oneself~~

for a great love.

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872135

Aug 10 2004 3: 3PM FE

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 10 2004 3: 3PM FE

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

6

You know, ~~there are all these expressions~~ that every

~~drummer in Napoleon's army used to carry a marshall's baton~~

So, every ~~old~~ sexist who is sort of good looking and bit of a stud and

in white
has a rep as a good lover, under all that, ~~might~~ be dreaming, really

a in the future. They're
dreaming of the great love affair of all time. And what they're

they
doing is getting ready for the great affair by having all these *meanings*

affairs. *More than one model star*
has had this psychology. That's

JBM: And that would be to their benefit, actually. Because to

maintain a great love affair, one must be a great lover

NM: Yes, yes. I'd say you have to be 90% a great lover

JBM: No more than twice a month?

FROM : NM

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 11 11:14 PM

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 11 11:51 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

~~NM: Hey, you're talking to an old man. Don't invade my turf.~~

~~JBM: Sorry about that.~~

~~NM: But that's where amorality becomes interesting. As a vehicle~~

~~to increase one's knowledge. And most men who have a rich sex~~ *life*

~~life, and by rich, I mean they've had many, many women in their~~

~~life—that's one of the reasons they do it. You~~ learn an awful lot

from intercourse, *you* just do.

Henry Miller once said something to the effect ~~I'm~~

~~paraphrasing~~ that there's no such thing as a bad fuck. I think

what he meant ~~by~~ that *do* no matter how bad the fuck *is*, you learn

from it. ~~You learn~~ something about the woman, *and* you learn

something about yourself, ~~you learn what works, where you can~~

FROM :nm

FAX NO. :5084872136

Aug 11 2:12 PM '04

FROM :JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. :17186243782

Aug 13 11:34 AM '04

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3

~~perform, where you're lost—fucking is a particularly rich~~

~~experience. And so certain people go after it~~ ^{*fucking*} ~~like gold miners~~ ^{*X*}

^{*They're*} ~~gold miner's~~ not worrying about the earth—they want to ~~get~~ the

goddamn gold.

JBM: Do you learn more from sleeping with ten women, or

sleeping with one woman for ten years?

NM: It ~~absolutely~~ ^{*Depends*} depends on who's doing it, ~~how~~, and to whom.

The average man ^{*who is*} ~~whose~~ full of sensuality would probably opt for

the first course. You ^{*need to feel*} ~~have to have a~~ really extraordinary love to be

~~able to be faithful to someone for ten years and have it remain rich~~

~~and good. I feel as if after all these years, after~~ ^{*my*} my own checkered

career, being married six times, ~~having 9 children with these six~~

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

9

~~ladies~~ 8 children and one terrific stepson ~~that~~ I've been on

that
both sides of ~~this~~ question.

I've certainly been amoral in my day. Cold as ice, *with a few* But on

I've been the other hand, ~~able to be attracted~~ *certain* immensely to the qualities that

women have. ~~I'd say that in my case, my amorality~~ if we're

going to get into it—was a search. I wanted to learn more and

More and more
~~more and more~~ about sex. I sometimes think if pornography had

(disappeared with
~~come along when I was a young man, it would have~~

FROM : NM

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 11 10:17 AM P2

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 11 11:11 AM P10

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are magnified positively or negatively,
but if you saw them in a porno, you'd say, "No, she's really not my

type." And vice versa. I think a lot of women could benefit from

~~pornography. They'd say, "that guy has a huge cock but when you~~

~~get down to it, I don't know if I'd want him inside me because of~~

~~something else I don't like about him." So forth and so on.~~

let's get back to
JBM: Before we move on from amorality, we started off with

Clinton's quote: "I did it because I could." What are your

thoughts on ~~his relation to Monica Lewinsky~~ now, the way he *is being*

to Monica Lewinsky
~~handled her in his book?~~ say?

NM: You know, I have a cynical response to that. I know Clinton

Clinton is
slightly. As people go, he's not the worst guy you're going to meet

He has a lot of natural warmth and humanity in him *from* plus a great

FROM :RM

FAX NO. :5084872136

Aug. 10 1994 11:11 PM

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Aug. 10 2004 PM 1:11 P11

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

deal of everything else a president needs, calculation,

of In this case,
manipulation, all that. But I thought his remarks were needlessly

~~old and cruel.~~ And I think given his druthers, he would have *preferred*

to be
~~been~~ nicer about Monica Lewinsky, but you've got to remember he

an *He had*
had a very angry wife on his hands. And I have to think the

~~novelist in me began to say to himself, "Yeah, he's just afraid of,~~

to
~~his wife at this point. He's got to come in with something that will~~

Hillary was more on his mind
satisfy her—~~Monica was not on his mind, Hillary was in replying,~~

then Monica.
~~to those elements."~~

"I did it because I could" is ~~just a lot of~~ bullshit. In that it's -

fairly
~~empty~~ an empty remark. Anyone who's met Monica—and we

have—knows she's a very attractive girl. She's got a kind of inner

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

~~dynamism, a certain electricity~~, She's got beautiful coloring, she's

intense, she's a woman ~~a young, attractive woman~~. That's why *the 2nd reason*

he did it.

And
He also ~~did it~~ for another reason entirely, which is even

richer, although meaner, ~~so to speak, in the circumstances~~ is that

A
~~one very bright woman I know, Betty Lifton, the wife of Bob~~

4
~~Lifton~~, once said to me that, "You know, Clinton lives in a

minimum security prison. Every fifteen minutes, security *check up* has to

on
~~know~~ where he is." And I thought, she's absolutely right. What

an incarcerated man
we're dealing with here is a ~~social prisoner~~. It's as if he's in the

finest, grandest minimum security prison in the world, the White

House. So *In* that sense, 5% of him, ~~10% of him~~ is a convict.

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Aug 10 2004 2:05 PM

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Aug 10 2004 2:05 PM

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JBM: To this day?

NM: No, ^{only} when you're President. But every fifteen minutes

~~someone knows where you are, you're under surveillance~~

surveillance is one of the elements of prison life, so in a subtle way,

you're a ~~bit of a convict~~, Not a criminal, but a convict an...

an innocent convict, if you will. You didn't want to be ^{want to become?} President ~~so~~

^{in order to} he scrutinized every fifteen minutes but that came ^{did come} with the job

JBM: ^{once you're} So in prison, you do what you can get away with?

NM: Exactly.

JBM: ^{Then} ~~So~~ his remark is not so hollow.

NM: I see what you're saying ^{yes, it is} not so hollow as I thought. Right?

In other words, ^{does become} he did it because he could ~~is~~ one of the elements.

FROM :nm

FAX NO. :5084872136

Aug 10 2004 3:31 PM FE

FROM :JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. :17186243782

Aug 10 2004 11:30 PM P14

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

Still he was needlessly
~~What I object to in the remark is it was very cutting in relation to~~

I repeat: Because of his
Monica. ~~Needlessly cutting. And I say that was because of his~~

wife. Having been married six times, I know what one says to

on such occasions,
~~wishes~~

JBM: You're a good one to talk to about it. *that they were improving*
~~Larger than that.~~

~~though, it's not that he has a wife~~ ~~he~~ he has a wife who most likely

high
will run for office and he's still very much in the political realm. I

want to assume he would not have been so cold and so heartless in

regard to Monica, particularly since she's a friend of mine, but I

understand why he had to do it the way he did it. He's not a

normal man who operates under normal rules.

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 10 1996 11:22 PM

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 10 1996 04:22 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

→ ^{real?} My question is, by making that calculated decision, to

~~distance~~ ^{Monica} Monica, to take the humanity away from her in order to

preserve the image of his marriage — ^{would you act} is that immoral, or amoral?

is that the right move?

NM: It's ^{most} a little of both. It's immoral in that he is ^{calculatedly} no

telling the truth about his real feelings. It's amoral ^{because} in that he wants

to keep the ^{political} machine, the process going: he's a politician, and

^{have to be} they're amoral to a degree. It's a question of how much. Are they

44% amoral or 88% amoral? [?] ^{Politicians can hardly} You take it for granted a politician is

amoral because they can't afford morality except when it's ^{as} a series

of specious sentiments ^{ready to} that can be uttered as patriotic or

theological slogans. But normally speaking, a politician has to

NM AND IBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

deal with the given ^{can} and that means sometimes they tell the truth

^{times} Usually ^{Politics} and sometimes they're pretending to tell the truth. In other words

^{Don't} they have

profound habits of not addressing the truth head-on.

~~So, given the situation, you're quite right: he did not want to hurt Hillary's future as a politician. It would have injured it if he said, "well, I really found Monica Lewinsky attractive." That was a no-no. So in a certain sense what he did may have been on the order of any number of unpleasant things politicians have to do.~~

~~In practice they do have to shake every day of their lives. Because a politician always has to shake-~~

~~hands with people they can't bear to look at. To smile and offer~~

~~patriotic remarks that don't ^{always} necessarily come from the heart, itself.~~

~~They have to pretend to be part of the team when they're steaming~~

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872135

Aug 10 10:30 AM '04

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FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 10 10:30 AM '04

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~~and fuming within. So in that sense, yes, he did what he had to~~

~~do~~

Now, whether ~~it's~~ ^{or} immoral, amoral, both, or if you just want ^{it was all to}

~~to say it was a necessity, it was the given, when you have to do~~

~~something out of necessity, it's not as amoral as if you're doing it~~

~~out of choice. That's a question we can on with forever.~~

JBM: Is it possible for a politician today to live by ^{his} their own

code?

NM: No.

JBM: Was it possible in FDR's day?

NM: No. It's never possible. *Go back to the beginning;*

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

~~JBM: It's never been possible?~~~~JBM: Look the famous remark:~~ "politics is the art of the

possible." When you're dealing with the art of the possible, what's

important is to ^{get} ~~get something done, some~~ part of what you want.~~that's how it goes in a democracy,~~
done. So the way politics works in a democracy.The irony is, the only way you can have ^{a direct} ~~pure~~ a pure^{your} expression of one's own personality, in the abstract, is in a^{as democrats}
^{of course, we feel}
dictatorship. The thing that's totally wrong with a dictatorship ^{is} ~~is~~^{that}
~~know~~ it instinctively, ~~if~~ no human being is good enough to be^{So a change}
entrusted with that kind of power. But in (democracy, what^{comes) from}
~~happens is in order for it to work, it's~~ always a negotiation. Whenpeople walk away from a political compact, everyone ~~walks away~~*is the 2nd step.*

FROM : NM

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 10 2004 9:11 PM

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 10 2004 9:19 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

19

a little dissatisfied—the old story of negotiation. If both sides
aren't a little dissatisfied with the result, it wasn't a good
negotiation, it's an oppression.

JBM: I'm still too much of an optimist. I think that's choice B.

~~But anyway...~~

NM: Well, if you ever get into politics, and you well may—with

that name of yours, how can you not?—~~with that name of yours.~~

you're going to discover the interesting compromises you'll have to

make, willy-nilly.

FROM : nm

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Page : 1 of 1

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Page : 1 of 1

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

JBM: Let's move on—you've written about the cultural necessity of literature. Yet we now live in a time when the novelist and literature itself are borderline irrelevant.

NM: Irrelevant?

JBM: Irrelevant. Borderline irrelevant. *There's a* ~~Commensurate with this~~

~~loss is the~~ absence of interiority, of serious, concentrated thought.

~~We presume literature will be lost forever—well, I don't know that~~

we may be in
~~we do. We're in~~ danger of losing literature forever. What would

this mean for American culture?

As a novelist, I'm now speaking
NM: Well, of course, I'm a novelist. And therefore, I'm speaking

my *It's certainly*
from a vested position, ~~that's~~ being eroded. When I began,

NM AND JBM playboy14 transcript 8/10/04

1

Good novelists were ^{more} ~~very~~ important in the scheme of things. The irony

is that the great novelists like Hemingway and Faulkner probably

didn't sell as many copies per book as ^{as some serious} ~~novelists sell now~~ some

^{sell now} ~~good~~ novelists. But they were revered. They affected history

^{had their impact on} They affected the American spirit. Hemingway had a prodigious

^{for} influence on young American writers. He taught a lot of us how to
^{look for the tensile strength of a sentence}
~~write~~. He improved the language by the simplicity and the force ~~it~~

~~it~~ by the subtlety of his simplicity. He gave a great deal to people

who care about English.

I think ~~the importance is~~ a nation's greatness depends, to a
great extent, on how well-spoken the citizens are. ^{is} ~~The best things~~

develop out of a populace that really knows how to use the

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Aug 17 2004 3:31PM P14

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FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 21 2004 : 6PM P3

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

~~Would Britain have~~ *Would Britain have* ~~language and use it well. And as a language deteriorates,~~ *language and use it well. And as a language deteriorates,*

as it becomes less eloquent, less metaphorical, less salient, less

curious
poignant, a deadness comes into things, a ~~certain~~ deadening of the
human spirit.

All this is wrapped up in my mind with many other aspects
of the phenomenon. America has moved, as a country from a
place that had a great love of freedom and creativity—along with
all the people who opposed that—to a country *(now that's)* much
more interested in power. *And I fear power is not interested in*
And power is not interested in

metaphor. Metaphor is antagonistic to power because metaphor
makes you begin to think in parallels. Power demand a uni-linear
approach to things. Power does not entertain poetic questions

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Aug 11 2004 11:30 AM F13

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Aug 11 2004 1:12 AM P.1

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

73

JBM: But hasn't power always been a driving force?

NM: Yes. But it was always a driving force among ^{some} many other

~~religion~~ ^{as culture and a} driving forces. ^{It's now as if power is becoming more and more} ~~It's now as if power is becoming more and more~~

^{more} ~~pervasive in every other aspect of life. I'm not ready to talk about~~ ^{than any other}

~~technology yet. But we can come back to this question.~~

JBM: The way I put it is that writers used to be rock stars. Now ^{it's}

~~the~~ rock stars ~~are the ones who have the same credibility with the~~

masses. Justin Timberlake, whom I'm sure is a sweet guy, ~~he~~

shouldn't be influencing a generation. He's a pop singer. He was

created by Disney. I'm sure he's a nice guy but that burden

shouldn't be on his shoulders. And it didn't used to be that way.

Somewhere between the lines, I'm not sure where, it shifted from

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

2

great minds speaking to the masses to celebrities speaking to the masses.

NM: Be careful. You're too young to know how it was back then.

There weren't—

JBM: I can read history—

NM: Great minds almost never speak directly to the masses.

JBM: Not directly. But Hemingway would write a piece, you would write a piece, and people would discuss it and debate it and people would go back and forth—

NM: Leave me out of it.

JBM: OK. Another example—[pause] My point is, not to have to use you as an example, but you're on my mind—The White Negro

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

To this day, people come up to me who were teenagers when they came out and they want to argue with me about it, talk to me about it. It still affects them to this day. I don't think any essay by anyone now could have the same effect. A movie would. A video would.

That's one reason Michael Moore is interesting because I think he's aware that while his books are good, and are what they are, he's going to reach so many more that way. But you can't get the same depth of an idea across in a sound bite—there's no way

why not

NM: Yes. But look, ~~let's~~ use a rating system for ideas. The most profound ideas are those one is willing to die for. By that

measure, Karl Marx has to be one of the greatest writers who ever

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70

after
lived. Because *it* was all over, hundreds of thousands of people,
~~literally~~, all over the world were willing to die for his ideas. And
millions were willing to go to prison *than* for his ideas. He had an
enormous effect.

This is not to raise a latter-day defense of Marx. He had
many, many incredible virtues as a thinker. He also, from my
point of view, had *his* ~~many~~ lacks. He certainly didn't understand that
atheism is not a way to win the world. You can't *that easy* ~~win the world~~
~~with atheism~~ because ~~at least~~ *3* half the people alive, maybe three-
quarters of the people alive, have all sorts of instinctive notions
that God exists. ~~And~~ I think the real failure—just
parenthetically—of Bolshevism which became Stalinism, was this

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7

clinging to a concept that didn't work, which ^{that is} there ~~was~~ no need

to deal with a creator.

If we're ever going to have a great society in the future, ~~— which is hardly a guaranteed conclusion —~~
~~think what we'll have is a society~~ ^{and} with great freedom and openness,
~~but with~~ ^{there will be} nonetheless a recognition ^{that} which dispenses with ~~all the~~
fundamentalism ^{does} but ^{idea} lives with the concept that God is a creator.

God is a creator, not a law-giver.

JBM: But there's another problem there which was not dealt with, ^{John James says to p. 36: "a growing cult."}

namely, people are not content merely with what they need. We're

selfish, we want more than we need and people in power will take

it—as we saw, as we see here.

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18

NM: There's a balance here—what happens is that half the people in America by now identify with the upper classes because they feel less interested in being part of the strong middle or the strong bottom, it's more, "I want to be up there with those guys and I can do it."

JBM: You think it's happening? In America?

NM: Yes. I'm not saying half of America is going to get there - they certainly won't. That's one of the ironies—half the people in America really believe power is the wonderful thing, money is the wonderful thing. Prosperity is the wonderful thing. And their real hope is they'll get there. They don't want to be part of the people

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29

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who are leveling the playing table—they are un-leveling the playing table.

Give me a better explanation for it. The Republicans are the party of the wealthy, yet election after election after election, they win it or lose it by close margins.

JBM: I think it's because their propaganda is very good and very elevated. It's the same way in Arkansas, that the poor-as-shit white-trash people feel it's OK because at least they're not black, and they're living up on the mountain with the rest of them who are just as poor, maybe a little less poor—

NM: The blacks in Arkansas live in the hollows, not on mountains.

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30

JBM: Put it this way: in the black part. The divide is there, and
it's there to keep the poor white people pacified.

NM: That's old stuff.

JBM: I know it's old stuff, but to say half of America relates to
rich America isn't—

NM: John, when you get to generalizations, their only value is
they do point to a trend, a possibility. I think we're at a dead end
here—or down an alley.

if it's as bad as that now, who's
JBM: OK, who's going to be the last novelist?

He'll be comparable to any lonely poet now
NM: He's going to be equal to the last poet alive who writes five

act verse plays in iambic pentameter. In other words, I do foresee

hardly anybody will read
a day when the serious novel ceases to be important. Nobody will

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

serious fiction~~read a serious novel.~~ They may read computer novels that become*The computer*~~best-sellers.~~ Because finally the computer novel is better suited toturn out a best-seller than the average mediocre ^{talent} writer. But as faras the serious novels go, *people will be looking* ~~Ok, what's a serious novel?~~ A serious*for technological power rather than*
~~novel enters moral questions that you don't locate anywhere else~~
*searching for, they can't find*The real spectre that sits before us *if the novel dies* is the*is that serious fiction*
~~novel~~ has always been the repository of the most interesting and

subtle moral questions. At its best in a novel, these questions are

at best, no
~~far deeper than you're going to get in any church or synagogue or~~
*any wisdom receive*mosque, whatever in the world — ~~dojo or whatever you want to call~~*when it comes to moral philosophy*
12. Theology is essentially limited ~~because it's formal and~~*It's too structured.*
~~structured.~~ And ^{that} what makes morality interesting is ~~it almost never~~

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32

~~fits the structures of theology and the pre-arranged moral codes~~

So it's the novelist—the good novelist, the very good novelist—

who deals with ^{such} these moral issues, ^{as can} these essential issues. "Am I a ^{balance} La

a good person or a bad person?" You don't find that out by ^{deciding,} saying,

"well, I'm a good person because I obey the Ten

Commandments" ^{stet} ~~that doesn't make you a good person~~ You can ^{still}

~~obey the Ten Commandments and be a horror because you restrict~~

^{others with your piety.} the lives of ~~those around you.~~ The question is not just your own.

^{just} actions but what do you do to the lives of others? And in that

sense, the novel is marvelous ^{leading} for turning our moral questions into

subtler inquiries of our nature.

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Aug. 1 2003 1:38 AM F14

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33

What is human nature? We're still finding that out ~~that we~~

begin to have more of a sense of who we are as human beings

because for all the work of all the centuries and all the thinking

we're still wrestling with this. Human nature is immensely

various, the way I believe, incidentally, that God is immensely

various,

~~various.~~ We're the children, if you will, of the Creator and one of

I believe

~~the strong feelings I have~~ is that God doesn't want to give us orders

rather He ~~wishes~~ wishes

from above; ~~he~~ wants us to find out things we can send back to

Him. Or Her. Does the parent always want to be superior to the

child? No. They want the child to surpass them ~~that's the idea~~

of creation.

*(I believe we are
the children of the
Creator = God)*

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Aug. 11 2004 11:31 PM F11

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Aug. 11 2004 12:01 AM P15

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14

JBM: Well, that's good to hear. But ^{if} don't you think that very

reason, right there, is enough to keep the novel alive? (Aside from

the fact—you look at the case of the John Irving book that was just

made into a movie called "The Door in the Floor"—they changed

the title of his book. Movies need books, just to have enough

movies. With reality TV, we see there's not enough original

screenplays coming out, a lot of them with adaptations. The

combination of that with what you're talking about—there's no

way of exploring a complicated moral question better than a

novel—won't that keep it alive?

NM: Not necessarily. Because what you're leaving out are the

social needs ^{all} of the people who run things ^{all} over the world. What

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Aug 11 2001 3:44 PM P13

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34

~~you've got now is a very endangered and~~ ^{Ag} immensely powerful

global capitalism ^{is} shaping up. And that capitalism does not need

~~dissent, it does not need inquiry into delicate matters; it needs to~~ ^{dissent or} ^{it's used to}

^{running} to keep the bullshit train going at top speed. It has to keep the lively- ^{enforce the}

^{self-serving} notion that corporations are good for human existence. It needs to

have most people believing that there's no other answer but big ^{business}

business. And so, as a result, the last thing they need is novels

~~And they've found~~ ^B it's part of the genius of capitalism.

upper capitalism, particularly ^{is that} ~~they've found~~ ways to control

people that are so much subtler than the old Stalinist ways which

were brutal, dull, cold, and stupid and very ^{careful} very obviously openly

oppressive. The modern form of oppression is subtle; it gets into

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411 11/11/04 11:31 AM F11

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

36

your psyche in subtle ways—it makes you think there's something

wrong with you if you're not on the big capitalist team. And in

that sense they don't need novelists. They don't want them. They

don't want people exploring into morality. They want only one

Unlike
morality, theirs. ~~Just like~~ Stalinism at its worst,

regime
~~Here~~ it's much more of a benign, *open*, superficially open, *and*

the *or*
~~ready for change, ready for development, in love with technology~~

gives
which will make all our lives extraordinary—*well*, technology *is*

even if
~~well end up keeping us alive for 150 or 200 years, and three~~

three-quarters of us will be replacement parts. I'm not sure that's either

God's intention or the real human intention. I'm not sure of that, and

it
all—~~that~~ may be the destruction of the human spirit, to stay alive

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

17

beyond a certain point. Maybe death is as important to life as life

itself. ^{IF} As they keep extending the ^{years} extent of your life at all costs -

it could be one more form of evil. All this is too much taken for granted.

But ^{the} to go back to my original point: ~~the novel~~ is antipathetic

to corporate capitalism, ^{the} (the good novel, the serious novel) The

best-seller is one of the props of corporate capitalism ^{price, selling} because it's

an entertainment. People feel, "At the end of my work, I want to

have fun, ^{Give me} so how do I have fun? I watch asshole TV shows, &

bec. stupid exploitation films with lots of bang
watch often stupid movies — because people often don't go to the

^{want to} best films. I certainly don't read a good book — I want a book

that's a page-turner." Well, every time there's a page-turner for too

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

38

little, someone's mind is being ~~slightly~~ dulled. Because even page-

turners get into interesting moral questions, but they avoid them

from the parents

JBM: ~~But~~ what you're talking about isn't limited to the novel

You're talking about *good* art in general and *which* good art pushes you and

pokes you, makes you think — whether it's a play or novel or

~~movie~~. I think the challenge, though, is that because it's more

work to read a novel that's going to *exercise* make your mind exercise and

question things in your inner soul — the challenge is to make it

more entertaining ~~than the fluff~~ to the point where *so* people can't pull

it down, they have no choice, they have to go into it.

NM: You know, I'm cynical about that, for a simple reason..

~~because~~ I started as that kind of writer and I know how easy it is.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

39

It's so easy to write a page-turner. There are ^{3 each} very simple rules for

it. I can teach any mediocre writer to ^{turn out} write a page-turner. I'm

interested in something that's good enough and well enough

written so you ^{have to} stop on the page and read over the sentence a few

times, because each time you ~~read~~ it, it vibrates within you and

tells ~~you~~ more.

Once you get into page-turners, it's equal to a very fast-paced
superficial television show, or the kind of musical comedy play

that's very successful ^{as} where you sit there with your mate and ~~you~~

laugh and laugh and laugh at the play, then walk out and say,

"Gee, wasn't that empty?"

FROM :nm

FAX NO. :5084872136

Aug 10 1:01 PM F11

FROM :JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. :17186243782

Aug 10 1:02 AM F21

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40

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JBM: But can't you have both? Can't you have parts that are page-turners and parts that you stop and read five times"

NM: Occasionally. You can have writers who are close to great or great, who can do both, but usually the serious novel gives up the notion that it's going to be *an easy read,* ~~a page-turner.~~

JBM: Wasn't "The Naked and the Dead" both?

NM: Yeah. But that was because I was an amateur and didn't know—also, I had huge, huge material to draw from.

JBM: Yeah, but that was a best-seller and rightfully so, but compared to Tolstoy—it was deeper on that level. There was a beautiful balance of the two.

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Aug 11 2004 11:12 AM P20

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41

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NM: Compared to Tolstoy, it was a superficial novel

JBM: Of course. But is it not possible to have that again? Why
can't we have best-sellers that are deeper?

NM: We have them from time to time, best-sellers that are pretty
good.

JBM: Can you name one?

NM: No. Since I don't read them and don't follow. . . I'm too old
now and too set in my ways to follow them now. Can you name
them?

JBM: I can name the ones that've had impact. I don't know that
they're great novels.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

47

NM: "The Catcher in the Rye" had a huge impact.

Delella p. 47

JBM: I don't know that that's very current.

NM: No, but . . .

JBM: "The Corrections" would be one that comes to mind.

NM: Well, that was a serious novel and it was an interesting phenomenon. I had many disagreements with it—he's certainly an immensely talented writer. But I think part of that is the review machine. People who do book reviews and manage the literary world—they feel terribly threatened by the fact that the serious novel is going. They're serious about being book review editors. And the best of them are always looking for new writers who will be extraordinary. So occasionally you'll get books that may not be my all-time favorite novels—one of the two or three or four great novels of all time for me. I had that and "War and Peace" on my desk while I was writing "The Naked and the Dead" and to get

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

34

steamed up to write every morning. I'd read five or ten pages of it

So I applaud her for that.

JBM: Well, this is what I'm saying: Because she has such popular

mass appeal, she can take something that is dense and hard to

read—"Anna Karenina" is work to read—she can take that and

make it a best-seller. That gives hope to me.

NM: But if she keeps doing it, her popularity will begin to

diminish and then we'll begin to see the real test of her character.

Is she really devoted to great literature or is she, quite naturally

really devoted to the power of her own career?

JBM: Well, I would ask can she raise great literature back up to

the level of best-sellers or. . .

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Aug 11 11:11 AM F21

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17196243782

Aug 11 11:11 AM F25

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NM: I would answer in the negative. No. No person can do it.

You're so young you still believe in the power of individuals. The

real fact—what I would like to see develop in you, my friend, over

the next ten years, is a much deeper notion of social structure

Because society—it's as if we're little animals running through the

machine. Occasionally we touch a switch, something starts, we

start another little machine, but we can't really change the nature

of the machine that much. Not without great study and great

devotion and willingness to get into the grease of the machine

JBM: And great luck.

No, I respect the complexity of the machine—I don't think

one person can change the way of the machine, but there's that

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

45

great RFK line, I'm paraphrasing—that every action you do is

essentially throwing a pebble into a pond and it sends out ripples

that affect other things.

NM: I don't want to get into that metaphor because the ripples do

die out.

JBM: Unless they're strong enough.

NM: How many times does a pebble thrown into a pond change

the nature of the shoreline? Let's stop the crap.

pp 1-11

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

7

JBM: Let's move on to Provincetown. Provincetown which is

known as a gay tourist town in the summers ^{P-town} has been your home

for over 50 years, yes?

NM: ^{only} Yes, [pause] Let me amend that: it's been my home for

^{but} ~~some~~ 15 years, and the first time I ^{came} ~~came~~ here ^{was} ~~was~~ to Provincetown was

almost 60 years ago, and I've ^{partly spent} ~~probably spent time~~ (serious time) in

Provincetown over 45 or 50 of the last 60 years.

JBM: Now, Provincetown in winter—a lot of people see it as

being abandoned. It goes from—what? 30,000 to 3,000?

NM: ~~Yes~~. Roughly.

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

4

JBM: Is ^{winter} it better than high season in the winter?

NM: Well, for ^a ~~an~~ ^{of my age} old writer, it's vastly better. There's an old

saying about P'town that in the winter ~~there are only two main~~

streets in Provincetown and they curl around the harbor. The one

that's nearer the water is called Commercial Street and it's a

narrow street, more like a 19th century street, even an 18th century

~~street, than a 20th century street. And there's the old saying that in~~

~~March~~ you can roll a bowling ball down Commercial Street and

it'll never hit anyone. So it's ^{here in February, and I love} very lonely in the winter and it's not

^{and} that cold, but it's cold enough because the wind's coming off the

water, ^{and} it's damp, it's cold, it's lonely, and I love it. It fits my

mood. It's much easier to spend the day writing if it's gray outside.

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FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug. 11 2004 11:13 P3

FROM : JMWORCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug. 11 2004 11:13 P3

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besides
than if it's sunny. ~~And along with that,~~ all the people I used to

here know in Provincetown ~~over the years~~ *are dead now* ~~parenthetically,~~

Provincetown has changed profoundly. It's now the gay capital of

Forty or fifty
the northeast. ~~Thirty years ago~~ *even 40 or 50 years ago*, after the

~~Second World War~~, it used to be the wild west of the east, ~~and~~

~~least the wild west of Cape Cod~~—you had motorcycle gangs

coming in all the time. You'd have people getting ~~on~~ Saturday

nights, you'd have people going up in the hills and you'd have

real bachannals ~~up in the hills~~, everybody carrying booze or beer

JBM: Well, you still have motorcycle gangs coming in—it's just

that they're wearing chaps with nothing on underneath

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Page 1 P4

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Page 1 P4

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

NM: [laughs] All right.

JBM: Having spent a lot of time in this town growing up, and in

the last few years as well, I don't see this as a gay town. I see this

as a very libertarian town in the sense of, as long as you're not

hurting anyone else, whatever you're doing is cool.

NM: Well, that's true. There's been that tradition in

Provincetown. There are amazing contrasts and contradictions in

Provincetown. After all, Provincetown is the place where the

Pilgrims first landed.

JBM: Why did they leave?

NM: Well, like all good white people who are righteous and not

quite aware of how mean they are under the righteousness, and

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Aug 11 2004 11:41 P5

FROM : JMWORCRAFT

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Aug 11 2004 11:41 P5

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I say "white people," it's just to make a huge generalization. most

black people have a better understanding of what's not altogether

nice in themselves than white people do—I hope not to suffer

unduly for that remark.

Anyway, there they were, full of themselves, heroic in a

sense. After all, they had dared to leave their roots and sail ~~across~~

the Atlantic

~~frail boat~~ with children cramped in a small boat and they got here.

Get here through great difficulty. It was very hard to navigate the

waters around Cape Cod in an old-fashioned sailing ship. But

but there is there's a natural harbor in Provincetown because *the land* it curls around

so they like a snail shell. They entered the harbor—parenthetically, the

was one of few place where they landed is commemorated by a huge motel—and

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug. 1 2004 11:21 P5

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug. 1 2004 11:20 P6

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

we are nothing in America if not adaptative. They found the soil

not particularly welcoming, full of sand, brush pines, low country,

not good for farming. They were in search of food, went scouting

around, ^{reconstructed} about eight miles south of Provincetown and found a place

^{in Truro}
~~something~~ now called Corn Hill where the Indians had stored all

their corn for the coming winter. So they ~~took it~~ brought it back

to their ships, and in the course of ^{that action} it killed a couple of Indians and

^{Shortly after, those}
~~somewhere along the way, these~~ Puritans probably said to one

another, "Hey, let's get the fuck ^u out of ~~here~~." So they ^{crossed} explored the

other side of Massachusetts Bay and found Plymouth ^{where} and Plymouth.

then became the founding place of America.

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FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 1 2004 11 P7

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Aug 1 2004 11 P7

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

Well, a couple of hundred years later, in the early, middle

at the twenty first century
and late 19th century, the locals were furious. They were the first

that tower
place. How did Plymouth dare to call itself the founding place of

America? Starting place, whatever the phrase is. So they started

that by that
petitioning and it got so hot ~~that in 1909~~ a beautiful tower was

erected
built, a copy, *I think*, of an Italian tower in Sienna. *(OK)* I think it

President
Sienna, and Theodore Roosevelt actually came to the opening

That exceptional phallia tower is now
festivities, he was president then, and it was called the Pilgrim

Monument. So this the place where America started.

JBM: So America started with some white people stealing some

corn, killing some Indians and *going on the lawn*
~~getting the fuck out.~~

FROM : NM

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4/11/04 1:21 PM F5

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4/11/04 1:31 PM F5

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

54

NM: Yes.

JBM: Perfect.

pp-47-54 - word count 353

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1 8

4/11/04

4

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 11 2004 3:33 PM PS

FROM : JMWORDCRAF1

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 11 2004 3:14 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

5

JBM: OK, ^{here} ~~this~~ ^{query from Playboy} is a good ~~one~~: Did women's sexuality shape

human evolution? According to a theory in Leonard Shlain's new

book—which I haven't read—"Sex, Time and Power," menstruation ^{1 15}

what enabled women to develop a sense of time and forethought.

Language evolved, he says, primarily because men and women

had to negotiate sex. Women became expert, he says, at reading

between the lines of various Pleistocenes. Beauty was developed

to maintain the interest of men. Is this why women control men?

Which is a large statement in and of itself.

NM: I haven't read the book either—it strikes me as being a series ⁵⁻¹¹

of nonsensical theorems piled one on top of the other. For

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

5

(why even animals)
example, negotiating sex. ~~Animals negotiate sex all the time~~

I had two standard poodles once, many years ago, Tibo and Zha Zha

~~and Zha Zha one hell of an operative is she~~
~~and they ended up~~ Zha Zha was always nipping at Tibo's

~~nots,~~
backside. I was always afraid Tibo would end up ^{as} no man at all

~~the time~~
when he came of age ~~we had them when they were pups~~. She ~~was~~ ^{as} ~~me~~

dominated him all the time. She had fierce teeth, ~~she was always~~ ^{He}

at him. He'd duck, and ~~cover~~ ^{and} sit down. ~~fast~~

^{she} Then the time came ~~she came into heat~~ ^{for the first time} he seized her and

~~with no big yawn~~ ^{and}
impregnated her with nine pups the first time. Before they were

^{awake} done, they ended up with 36 pups over two or three years. Then

ability to negotiate sex was perfect. ~~They didn't need language.~~

But in fact, animals have a great deal of language in their grunts.

FROM : nm

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51 P1

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

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Aug.

1997

1 P1

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

7

their groans, their whines, their moans, their baying at the moon,

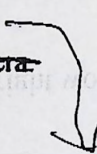
their scents. Odor ^{had} ~~has~~ much more to do with sex ^{than language} at least until

deodorants came on the scene. But before ^{modern} ~~deodorants~~, the

^{with ft-leadeness, any}
combination of strong genital odor mixed with perfume was pretty

^{yes, yes,}
damned aphrodisiacal ^{yes} all through every royal court of Europe ^{then}

^{notion}
~~cetera, et cetera~~


~~So the notion~~ that language was developed to facilitate sex

couldn't be sillier.

JBM: Or a sense of time developed through menstruation. ⁺

~~don't know if that . . .~~

NM: There I can see ~~there's~~ a certain kind of point. What

~~Menstruation~~ certainly proved to women, at least, that they were

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FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 10 10:22 PM '13

FROM : JMWORCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 11 2013 1:12 PM '13

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

altogether different from men. They had to have a different code

They had to find ways—I don't think women were as self-

protective a thousand years, 3,000 years, 5,000 years ago, 20,000

years ago as they are today. I think there was less embarrassment

perhaps, about menstruation.

JBM: Well, they would go off alone when it was happening

NM: Different tribes. Every tribe had its own.

JBM: That could be because you don't want the smell of blood in

the air to make you prey.

NM: You're talking about primitive people living with every smell

in the air there is.

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FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug. 12 2004 11:31 PM

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug. 11 2004 21:48 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

JBM: But blood is a scent that would bring attackers, wild

animals, wild bears—so you wouldn't want that in the camp.

NM: ~~You're right on that.~~ Absolutely right. I hadn't thought of

~~that e, the~~
~~that. I'm an old club fighter—I get mad when you miss.~~

JBM: Good. Keep throwing them. This ^{other} question—~~is this what~~

^{do} women control men? For one, do you think ^{so?} women control men?

NM: Completely.

JBM: I'm glad you agree.

NM: Before women's liberation came along, men used to have ^{25-35%}

^{or} 25% ^{to} 35% purchase on control in a marriage. The woman had ^{the remaining} 65%

or 75%. Now with women's liberation, it's 95%.

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug. 11 2004 P14

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug. 11 2004 P14

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

50

JBM: Wow!

NM: I could be wrong, maybe it's ^{only} 85%.

JBM: Is this why men are forever at a loss in regard to the

dominance of women?

NM: Well, ~~part of the dominance of women, which has always~~

~~been there in a way, is they're~~ ^{are} closer to the universe. Closer to

creation than we are. ^{So} They know ~~more than we do~~; they have

deeper instincts.

JBM: They create life, we destroy life.

NM: Oh, let's not get into that. Women have killed as many men

in subtle ways, for subtle reasons, ^{as} men have abused and killed

women ^{in more overt fashion,} ~~one way and another.~~

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

60

JBM: Wow!

NM: I could be wrong, maybe it's ^{only} 85%.JBM: Is this why men are forever at a loss in regard to the
dominance of women?NM: Well, ~~part of the dominance of women, which has always~~~~been there in a way, is they're~~ ^{are} closer to the universe. (Closer tocreation than we are. ^{So} They know ~~more than we do~~; they have
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~~women one way and another~~

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

61

JBM: I'm not saying one is more vicious than the other I'm

saying essentially, traditionally, men have gone to war and women

have raised the children. That's changing. Women are going to

war and we've seen what happens at Abu Ghraib.

NM: Oh, that poor pregnant girl. . .

JBM: I feel for her—I do.

NM: You do?

JBM: Yes, she was in the wrong place with the wrong guys.

feeling the wrong pressures and now she's all alone.

NM: She really was—just think how wild the parties are getting

all over America. The key factor at Abu Ghraib was, "Hey, none

of you at home are going to believe this until you see ^{but} the pictures.

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FAX NO. : 5864872136

Aug. 11 2004 12:41 PM

FROM : JMWORTCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug. 11 2004 12:43 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

JBM: Wow!

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NM: Well, part of the dominance of women, which has always

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women ^{in more overt fashion,} ~~one way and another.~~

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of you at home are going to believe this until you see ^{our} the pictures."

FROM :nm

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Aug 11 2004 11:31 PM EST

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Aug 11 2004 11:31 PM EST

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

62

And the photograph taking that was not called for—as well as the

photos that were called for—after all, they were ^{also} using the photos

^{to} ~~as sort of subtly blackmail the prisoners, as in, "we'll show this to~~

~~your family."~~ ^{the security was also} But they obviously were delighted to have these ^{gen}

~~these~~ photos ~~taken so they could send it~~ home to their friends. Just think

of the kind of party that's going on back in America, ~~the kind of~~

~~wildness that's loose in the country~~ under the cover of "We're a

good Christian nation."

JBM: The more Christian someone is, the more they have crazy

sexual stuff in the closet.

NM: You know, I love this country with all its faults, but one of

its huge faults is we're the bullshit kingdom of all time

found a way to process bullshit
is is wrong is an always apparent

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

.3

JBM: We are full of ourselves, that's for sure.

NM: Uhf. I don't know how you print "uhf" in a magazine

JBM: What do you think of the gender roles of men and women

that women
now ~~because~~ the line is certainly blurred between the

~~responsibilities. Women are expected to raise a family and be~~

successful in the workplace.

~~NM: I know, but it's getting to the point where the men are~~

~~required to be [side one runs out - start side two]~~

NM: For me, ~~there's~~ ~~acc, for me,~~ any notion that males are

superior to females or females ~~are~~ superior to males is, I'd say,

comparing dogs to cats. ~~It's a hopeless argument~~ in my mind.

When men are so
~~When~~ fundamentally different from ~~them~~ *women,*

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Aug. 12 10:00 AM '94

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Aug. 11 10:00 AM '94

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

-1

I still have to say that the

~~The~~ desire for power in women that's revealed itself in the

last ~~30~~ 35 years is not attractive. It's not attractive because the

The power they used to have ~~in my mind~~, was vastly more subtle. And

vastly more attractive. You know, ~~it~~ used to be kind of fun to

realize a woman was smarter than you. In the course of living

one's life and learning how to handle oneself, there were women

who developed wonderful subtleties about how to control ~~men~~.

They were like animal handlers if you will. And ~~just~~ as the

animal, even the lion, almost always adores the handler, so with

~~the woman knew how to handle the man.~~

FROM :nm

FAX NO. :5084872136

Aug 11 11 12 PM '05

FROM :JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. :17186243782

Aug 11 11 12 PM '05

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

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photos that were called for—after all, they were ^{also} using the photos

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~~your family."~~ ^{the security was also} But they obviously were delighted to have these

~~photos taken so they could send it~~ home to their friends. Just think

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~~wildness that's loose in the country~~ under the cover of "We're a

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JBM: The more Christian someone is, the more they have crazy

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NM: You know, I love this country with all its faults, but one

its huge faults is we're the bullshit kingdom of all time

found a way to process bullshit
found a way to process bullshit
found a way to process bullshit

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Aug 11 2004 4:05 PM

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Aug 11 2004 4:05 PM

NM AND IBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

64

I still have to say that the

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one's life and learning how to handle oneself, there were women

who developed wonderful subtleties about how to control ~~men~~^{us}

They were like animal handlers if you will. And ~~just~~ as the

animal, even the lion, almost always adores the handler, ~~so with~~

~~the woman knew how to handle the man.~~

FROM :NM

FAX NO. :5084872136

Aug 11 11:33 PM '11

FROM :JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. :17186243782

Aug 11 2011 3:13 PM F11

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

65

~~And~~ Now they're dominating ~~dominating~~ us openly. You
see? They're controlling you, almost. "Don't you dare say that!

~~That's sexist."~~

JBM: I don't know. I don't think I agree with that. It's changing.

There was the height of political correctness, which bordered on

fascism and ^{it} was terrifying. But the majority of the women that I

know, they want a real man—they don't want a man they can walk

all over.

NM: Well, good. I'm 81, and these traumatic experiences

occurred to me 30 years ago, 20 years ago—

JBM: You were living ^{then} at the height of the war. But what's truly

encouraging, what's encouraging me now, is we need more women

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

in power, but we need women who do it the way a woman does it,
not the way a man would do it if he were a woman—or the way
she thinks a man would do it if he were a woman.

NM: Listen, most of the women in power were not that
impressive. There was Maggie Thatcher—the Iron Lady, or The
~~Iron Maiden—Iron Lady, I think.~~ You know, she was effective as
a politician—in a certain sense she was more effective as a
politician than Ronald Reagan was, her counterpart at that time.

She wasn't a very nice person, ^{and} really. ~~But~~ if she'd been a male, she
^{thoroughly} would have been detested.

JBM: That's what I'm saying. I think she was doing it the way she
thought a man would do it if he were a woman. As opposed to

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NM AND JBM playboy04 (manuscript 8/10/04)

7

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someone, say, like Arianna Huffington who is completely a

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on fire." That's not something a man would say.

NM: How is that relevant to what we're talking about?

Well,
JBM: What I'm saying is we're just now starting to see women

getting into power positions who are still allowed to be women

They don't have to pretend to act like a man.

NM: Name a few, would you?

JBM: Arianna Huffington, Hillary Clinton—

NM: Hillary Clinton is a very good example. I met her many

years ago, oh, maybe 20, 25 years ago when she was the governor

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Page 11 of 11

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Page 11 of 11

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

51

wife in Arkansas. Probably in '84, 20 years ago. She was

immensely intelligent—I happened to sit next to her at dinner

and we had a marvelous conversation. I was impressed with how

bright she was, how open, and what a ^{fine} ~~find~~ mind she had. She's

not as interesting today. She a politician today. She's ~~very~~

cautious. Her books are boring. What's that one ^{417 for her : Village} about a village,

~~what's it called? [Jim note: "It Takes a Village. "]~~

~~The whole thing is, she's full of cant. The way Maggie~~

~~Thatcher was full of cant. Cant~~ ^{it's you say what's} ~~do you know what the word~~

~~means? Most people don't~~

~~JBM: whatever you. . .~~

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Aug 11 3PM FRI

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Aug 11 4PM FRI

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

69

NM: ~~What it means is you say what's~~ useful to say, not what you

believe. That is, ~~You~~ never speak from the heart; you speak from

~~the heart only, and you speak manipulatively all the time. And~~

Hillary is always watching her tongue these days. Totally

unspontaneous, ⁱⁿ exactly ^{as} in the way the average mediocre-to-good

effective politician ^{exercises his spiel,} ~~it's never never you speaking from the heart;~~

~~always from the mind, always in terms of the manipulation of the~~

~~moment.]~~

JBM: But as we said before, she's a politician at a high level. She

has no choice.

NM: So why get excited ~~about~~ her as a politician?

FROM :nm

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Page 1 of 1

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Page 1 of 1

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

1

JBM: I'm not saying we're there yet. I see people coming up at the ranks. I see Laura Dawn of MoveOn.org who is changing the face of politics. I see Arianna Huffington who is approaching it from a new angle. I mean, politics this year is more exciting than ever before in my lifetime, certainly. People who were never involved before are ^{going there} getting involved because it's getting sexier, it's ^{to be} getting more fun.

NM: All right. I can see a time when women are more important ^{and for better reasons} politically than they are now, but that doesn't mean anything ^{is} is going to change. In a certain sense, a politician ^{regardless of sex} is neutered ^{in person} in terms of gender by the process. By the process. By the process. A lot of politicians are ^{in person} very sexy guys because, after all, they're

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Aug. 11 2004 11:04:00 AM P2

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

7

all the time.
pressing the flesh ~~all the time~~. Shake a thousand hands in a day

and you're horny by the end of the day. The hands are telling you

something. The adoration ~~where's~~ the guy who won't get a hard-

on if he's admired by a lot of people? But, nonetheless, politics

dehumanizes you—and political leader.

JBM: OK, but...

NM: By the way, I don't say this out of sour grapes because when

I ran for mayor in that primary back in 1969, I considered it my

duty, believe it or not—as most politicians do. I felt God had

wanted me to go into politics to save New York. I was a fool, like

all the others. And I wasn't nearly as good as I thought I'd be in

politics but I was prepared to pay the price. And the price was a

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Aug 11 2004 4:2 P2

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NM AND IBM playboy04 (transcript 8/10/04)

serious one in my mind—I knew I would never write again. I

knew I would use up my soul in ways that were unhappy for me

But I felt: I haven't been a good guy. I haven't been that good a

guy all these years; I want to save my soul. Now this was crude

and simplistic thinking and I turned out to be ^avery ineffectual

politician, ended up with just a slice, a small slice. But I was

ready to bite the bullet. I knew it wasn't going to be good for my

soul, my personality, ^{or} and my best ideas, to become a politician. I'd

be used up by it. It's a tremendously difficult business. You

know, we respect basketball players because they have such

power, running up and down the court all day, that's incredible.

Well, very few humans can become good politicians because of

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NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

3

the amount of work you have to do every day. The responsibilities,
you have. The number of distasteful things you have to do in
every ~~eight, sixteen hour~~ session are immense. So I don't sneer at
politicians. I think they're entitled to the same kind of respect we
~~give reasonably~~
~~gave~~ good athletes. Their stamina is impressive. But I don't have
any illusions that in becoming a politician you become a nobler
person—very rarely does that happen. The only reason it does
~~once in awhile~~
happen is because it's an impossible creation if you can't have
exceptions to every single rule.

50 to 73 - 2009

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pp 1

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

302

JBM: You once wrote somewhere: "As many people die from an

excess of timidity as from bravery. Nobody ever mentions the

Do you care to give
~~How about~~ an explanation of courage?

Yes,

NM: (I have one ready-made. Courage can only be measured by

the ground from which you start. ~~In other words, which sea did~~~~you occupy from which to be brave?~~ An example I use all the

~~(time)~~ I've used it before, and will use it again and again

who is
~~typical old lady whose~~ *terribly* ill in every joint, immensely arthritic,

nonetheless has to get someplace—~~she wants to see a relative,~~

~~she~~ *and* has a reason to cross a difficult street, (she doesn't quite

understand the lights. ~~But~~ nonetheless she knows she must~~she~~ feels an inner imperative to cross that street. And she must go

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

74

~~to be it~~ ^{get across} even though she's terrified. I would call that ~~courage~~ ^{life}

~~say it is~~ ^{the case of} courage analogous to a well-trained Marine ~~who~~ ^{is} a good

~~at all afraid superficially of small things, who gets into~~ ^{must}

~~combat, sees his buddies injured or killed, goes through hell~~ ^{wounded, a good friend is lost}

~~he gets to the point where he thinks he may die~~ ^{he expects he will die} ~~Until he gets to that point~~ ^{where}

can't really speak of his courage ~~because~~ ^{he's} been trained to be

brave—you can motivate people to be brave. But when you get to

~~the point~~ ^{that's crux in combat} where you say, "It's not worth it. I'm scared shit

~~can't~~ ^{fuck it up} go on, I want to quit, I don't care about my buddies ~~with~~

to quit"—and then another side of you takes over and says ~~you~~ ^{will}

~~will not quit, you WILL go on, it is your duty, whether~~ ^{you}

not, you will go on"—that's courage.

NM AND JHM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

Courage, in a very real sense, can be meaningless if it comes too easily. If you're a marvelous athlete in a very easy way, ~~very~~ very good in your martial skills, you may feel panic ~~some~~ anxiety, you may feel a little this, a little that, but you're trained to be brave.

So I would say courage is transcendence. Whatever ~~level~~ level of competence ^{being} is in violent activities, dangerous activities, ~~very difficult human activities, whatever that level is.~~ if we go beyond ourselves, transcend ourselves, that's courage

That's why I say timidity kills. Timidity ~~kills~~ kills more people than bravery because every time one's timid, one's pulling back creative impulses in oneself, denying them, one's denting the ego,

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

76

And as an ego contracts out of shame, illness begins. This is my opinion.

JBM: So is courage a virtue, [?] ~~or is courage a selfish motive~~

NM: Oh, no, I would say courage ^{is} absolutely ^{is} a virtue. ^{it's a virtue. it is} ~~it may be~~

the virtue. I would go so far as to say that it's very hard to feel love

^{We can} if you're full of shame. ~~We're closer to feeling~~ love for someone

else when we have gained respect for ourselves— it's why ^{there is} ~~there is~~

this endless obsession with courage, ^{is} ~~in all people~~. Where ^{is} ~~is~~

who can ignore courage? It's like ^{it?} ~~the woman~~ ^{analogous to a} ~~I said the~~

~~I was~~ ^{I was} ~~before but it's worth repeating—like the woman~~ who ~~has~~

~~elegance. In other words, there are women who~~ ^{have} ~~appear no more~~

^{she} ~~wear~~ no jewelry, won't comb ^{her} ~~their~~ hair because ^{they} ~~they~~ hate women

NM AND IBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

feels
who are elegant ~~because they feel~~ those women are phony and

~~false. They feel the only thing that's really true is nature itself~~

want to be seen as my natural self." *Yes* But that woman can not

in full confidence.
~~truly sneer at elegance. (She hates it, she sneers at it, but she can~~

I know
~~sneer at it truly. Because a part of her feels that there's something~~

wrong with her, ~~that~~ she doesn't want to get the utmost out of

some
herself in appearance. By the same token, there are men ~~who~~

and that
at bravery, ~~They say it's overrated,~~ it breeds all sorts of ~~trouble~~

Of course it does. A macho brute is a macho brute, and ~~he~~

not even a saint
~~never attractive. But the point is, no man can sneer at bravery and~~

clear
courage with a completely ~~clear~~ and open heart. Not even

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

JBM: You know, one of the outcomes of living in such an organized society where everything is taken care of—men don't go out and kill their food and bring it back—there's a complicity almost a sense of deliberate forgetting that when it all comes down to it, ultimately we're fucking animals. And we'll bite each other and fight each other if our own is attacked. And I don't know this is true of everybody, but 95% of the time when I meet another man, ^{is} ~~that~~ is under it all ~~A~~ that sense of "Can I take you or can you take me?" And it's usually a kind of fun, smiling question and query but it's always there. And something like 9/11 reminds me all on a national level that tomorrow, like that [snaps fingers] all of this societal bullshit could be gone and we're back to grinding.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

'9

biting. And that's important. I think it's one of the major

differences between the mentality of a man in the millenium and

the mentality of a man in the '90s when political correctness was at

its height and the sensitive pony-tailed guy was getting laid more

than he should.

NM: Well, I think you've a serious situation when the sensitive

or over-sensitive—pony-tailed guy is getting laid more than the

macho brute.

JBM: I don't know that he was getting laid more than the macho

No, he
~~brute.~~ He was just getting ~~too~~ laid more than he should

little.

NM: Oh, you're a bigot.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

10

JBM: I've got my prejudices.

NM: You've got your father.

JBM: If you want to stay on courage, there's one more
merely a form of outrage, but I feel you've already answered that.
NM: I don't think courage is a form of outrage at all. as I've
described that.

JBM: In Freud's essay on the ~~on the~~ Uncanny, he contends that the
strongest instances of the uncanny involve "doubts whether an
apparently animate being is really alive, or conversely, whether a
lifeless object might not be in fact animate." We live in an age
where such distinctions become even less clear. This is undeniably
frightening. We're overmatched by our technology. Our ability to

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

1

comprehend is exceeded by the ability to construct and fabricate

You have spoken of the inanimate—that which cannot be

animated. Increasingly, it seems, we are overcome by this

uncanniness. Is there more of this to come in our future?

NM: I say absolutely yes, a great deal more. So long as

technology expands and expands, we're going to have more and

uneasiness.
more of it. I remember back in I think it was '69, I was down at

NASA, south of Houston, covering the first moonshot. April

In the book I wrote

~~I wrote a long book about it and in~~ there was a chapter called "The

Psychology of Machines," *which discussed the* ~~Because one thing impressed me~~ *the*

immense amount of attention these guys gave to glitches. They

worried them—there was something ^{so} spooky about glitches.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

12

other words, they had the best technology available, ^{and yet} ~~the most inexplicable little malfunctions~~ ^{would occur. It obsessed them.} ~~the~~ ^{real} question, I decided, even though they wouldn't admit it

themselves, was "Do machines have a psychology?" Now people

~~lately have been able to see certain examples of that. Do machines~~

~~have a psychology or do they not? Are the glitches all due to~~

~~the design? Is that the only reason things go wrong~~ ^{Do} ^{because} ~~and they~~

machines have temperaments?

JBM: Are we talking about a psychology or a soul?"

~~NM: Well, before there can be a soul, there can be a psychology.~~

~~JBM: But one is not contingent on the other?~~

NM: Look, you're beyond me on that one. ^{I was really} ~~All I'm getting at~~

~~this: I wrote this chapter, "On the Psychology of Machines"~~

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

13

~~if there was~~
 the question was, was there a psychology, in other words, was

~~if there was~~
 if there ^{was} an inner life, if you will, a ~~species of inner life~~ in the machine

~~that we were not in touch with, that was uncanny?~~ I rarely meet

~~now~~
 person who has a computer who doesn't feel their computer ^{new computer} has

personality. ~~Stronger~~ ^{on} that is cars—everyone feels his car out of his

~~own presence,~~
 personality.

JBM: They're becoming similar.

NM: Hmmm?

JBM: People's affinity for their computers and their cars, their

dependence on both, are becoming very similar.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

5.

~~NM: Those are easy ways to look at it. They're almost~~

~~affectionate, as you say. There is a case where the uncanny does~~

scare us, it pleases us almost.

JBM: ~~Well, they're not.~~ You know, whenever I hook my

computer up to the internet, she reacts very poorly and I feel it's the

equivalent of putting 10,000 dicks in out of the blue and she

saying, "Hey, I just want yours. What is this?" and she does

work as well. My car is different, but if I let somebody else drive

~~my car who isn't as in love with it, it doesn't respond as well~~

NM: But that can be explained rationally. You understand the

flow of gasoline and various other things as you step on the gas.

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

35

~~you know how to brake, you know what condition your brakes. I~~

~~in--it can all be explained.~~

~~The point is I don't disagree with Freud on all that~~

~~to disagree with him on other things but I think he really ^{Freud didn't} This~~

finger on the nature of the uncanny. And part of what is so

depressing about modern technology is the way it cuts off our

senses. One of the things that's so awful about plastic—and we

been fulminating against plastic—most unsuccessfully—

last 30, 40 years, is plastic is not uncanny. It's just there and it's

very hard to conceive of any kind of soul or spirit inhabiting the

^{stuff}
~~plastic~~ because it doesn't come out of nature. Any ~~new~~ ^{new} object that

~~comes out of nature~~ ^{does—even} (a wooden cane—has a touch of personality,

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

6

~~Anything that comes out of the earth as metal, has a~~

~~personality. But plastic doesn't. There's a great inertness.~~

~~And I always felt it ^{is} was the handmaiden to technology.~~

~~saying over and over, "What does technology mean? What does it~~

~~represent? Why do people love technology?" It means more~~

~~power, less pleasure. Live in a technological world and~~

~~slightly squirrely by the end of the day, you're ready to climb a wall~~

~~or two because it's so compressing on the nerves. It gives you~~

~~more power than you'd have without the technology but you pay~~

~~serious price for it, because you're a little more inert in some way or~~

~~finer sensibilities. So in that sense I've lost the point?~~

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

7

JBM: ~~It's is there more of this to come in the future?~~ Where is it

technology leading us? ~~But I think it's an important distinction~~ I'd

~~make between technology and technology involving plastic.~~

Because a car is technology ^{but} ~~and~~ it wasn't until recently that there

was plastic all over a car.

NM: ~~But I think in the long term,~~ As they make plastic stronger

~~and stronger,~~ and more analogous to steel—which they will ~~do~~, in

turn, cars will be made ^{entirely} of plastic finally because economical

speaking, it offers more profit.

But I'm going to

JBM: In a way it's similar to fluorescent lights, which are ugly

locks ugly underneath; it's scientifically proven people don't like

as well under fluorescent lights, but it's cheaper so it's universal

NM AND IBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

8

accepted as a good. Because it's cheaper and more energy-

efficient, but it's deadening the soul in a way that plastic is.

NM: I'm going to leave this. To ^{my} mind, the mediocrities have

over the world, and they march under the banner of technology

corporate vision, the purveyance of democracy to all the economies

of the world, whether they're ready for it, like it or ^{or incapable of} detest it.

at this point, but we tell them in effect,
knew, "Fuck you, you're going to end up a democracy whether you

like it or not," which turns democracy into a farce. Because, as

said over and over in the last few years, democracy is a grace

true democracy is sensitive, it's perishable, and we're in danger

right now of losing our democracy ^{right} (here). A lot of people are

worried about that, that finally, we may not be in control of our

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

~~democracy any more. And so, the point is, there are two~~

~~work in the world now: liberation and I won't say oppression~~

~~I'm looking for the word successfully controlled direction. And~~

~~the~~ ^{who} other people are running the world now, very badly in many

places. They have the feeling that successfully controlled direction

only Global capitalism does not speak of
is the answer, and of course, my feeling is exactly the opposite
a free market but of a controlled
universal ideology. It is alien to
~~That it's the creative possibilities in people that have not yet been~~

tapped in people who've never had a chance to be creative

work and die without creative moments in their lives. The hope

is buried in their when talk, that people
think, comes out of the (gene stream because very often I think
emerge from no sophisticated cultural background.
They are the
when you have people who are highly creative, you have ten

I see them as the
product of ten
generations of frustration from people who wanted to be

NM AND IBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

10

their lives gave them, and so what happens? An artist ~~creates~~ *creates*

Such an ~~man~~ *man*

this artist is receiving the fruits, all the bounty that was packed in

of his other love bears

the gene stream at conception. It also works with people who

also works in reverse

evil, ~~all the~~ *all the* restrained evils, ~~all the~~ withheld evils, ~~spread out~~

extended

by producing

over many ~~many~~ generations can end up in a monster, a dictator

IBM: There's an argument that our technology is stunting

evolution ~~and~~ *and* were we not spending so much time going out into

the computer ~~or whatever technological device we're going into~~

focusing on—the TV, what have you—more people would

a higher

evolved to the ~~the~~ psychic level. Instead, ~~what~~ we're developing

a technology where—every day we get closer to having our

that will be your phone and your email, your this, your that, your

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

11

internet access, a little device you carry with you and you'll
program your likes and dislikes into it—it'll be sending out a signal
and as you pass a stranger on the street—say you both like to
watch Star Trek, a little bell will go off on both, and it'll tell you
what your compatibility is. Why are we doing this?

NM: Because ^{of} the fear ~~it's~~ a deep fear. ~~What we've lost~~ are the

^{the} dubious but nonetheless intense consolations of religion in
~~previous centuries~~. You see, ^F formal, organized religion introduced

many perversities but it also offered notions that gave people hope,

~~that~~ ^{If} you were a good enough person, you'd enter heaven.

now, because religion truly stood in the way of the development of

capitalism and technology, even more

^{that is,}

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

02

JBM: Shall it we call it corporate capitalism?

NM: Yes. To me there's a difference between corporate capitalism
and small business.

JBM: Absolutely.

NM: I've said it before very recently: small business is creative.

The guy can be a lousy son of a bitch, he can be an awful fellow

a man's
but if he's running a small business, he's living by his wits.

Whereas ~~a corporation~~ people enter corporations so they can

smarts and instincts,
have to live by their ~~wits~~. So only a few people have to take

The corporation can be a relatively benign
responsibility. ~~It can be a~~ benign organization, ~~relatively speaking.~~

yet
compared to worse ones, but it is subtly, ~~but~~ completely in the

mind, totalitarian, the corporation. And this is spreading

NM AND JBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

everywhere ~~all over the world~~. People want to control the world.

Then what we're going to
because they're in terror that if the world isn't controlled, it's going

to blow it all up.

~~to blow apart~~. My feeling is if the corporations take over the

world, it will blow apart. It just doesn't ~~fit or~~ suit human nature

JBM: Have they not taken over the world already?

Not
NM: Yes, but ~~not~~ completely. Not completely. There are still

~~many~~ corners and avenues, games and places and what have you.

JBM: There's an underground. . .

(I will)
NM: That underground has to go a long way before it takes

seriously.

NM AND IBM playboy04 transcript 8/10/04

IBM: But just as we can't turn off the internet, we've spoken

before about how we can't shut off the corporation now--

it would be a disaster--

NM We've talked about it. [tape off]

word count 11,382